

2009-2011 Ride

***"Bernice's journey touched my life.."
..a lovely note from Betty Duncan, Antelope Creek, Oregon***

"I first saw Bernice and crew when I was heading to work one morning, June 26, 2009. I was driving to Baker City from my home on Antelope Creek near Hereford, Oregon, a trip of 50 miles. I had just driven by an RV and trailer parked near the North Fork Burnt River and I was approaching the old ghost town of Whitney when I notice a lady rider leading two horses, her dog trotting out in front. I thought to myself, :here's a snobby rich woman who drivers her RV out to a forest road just to ride her horses and walk her dog a mile or two."

On my trip that afternoon when I was almost home, there was that lady rider again, shaking out saddle blankets, making camp for the night further down the river, no RV and trailer anywhere in sight. "Wow. She's camping out here in cougar country all alone. She's a brave soul or crazy. She surely must have someone coming here to meet up with her."

Later that evening at home my boyfriend Jim and his buddy Shane told the latest gossip of a lady long rider who was supposed to be camped up the road in the forest. She was from Montana, Shane's home state, so he was bound and determined to drive up and find her camp and invite her down to the house for a dinner of fried morel mushrooms. Jim and I told him she'd shoot him for stepping into her camp at dusk, that if he insisted on going, he'd better get up there and find her before it got too dark. Turns out she greeted him warmly, but declined his invitation for dinner, hoping she could instead stop by in the morning for breakfast.

When she came down the road the next morning, I walked out to greet her as she dismounted and tethered her horses to graze. Bernice was the furthest thing from being that rich lady I'd envisioned her to be at first glance a couple days prior. She was so vivacious, heart warming, far from shy with strangers, and we all settled down to a hearty breakfast. The conversation flowed amongst us, just like we were all old friends. I invited Bernice to stay as long as she liked, make herself at home, enjoy a nice warm shower, washer and dryer, Internet and telephone. There was even a nice bedroom upstairs she was welcome to if she wanted the comfort of a soft bed instead of the cold hard ground. Claire was more than welcome as well. Jim, Shane and I had a morning's work of delivering firewood in Unity. Here I was walking out he door

leaving my home to a complete stranger I'd only just met, and I had no qualms about it.

Upon our return we found an excited Bernice on the front porch, looking like the lady of the house folding laundry and packing away fresh sheets and bedding back into saddle bags. She had been able to call friends, check her e-mail, and make arrangements to have friends meet her and camp out for the weekend. Much to her delight she would be able to continue on her journey from this point after all, and not change her route as her heart and soul had been nagging her to do. When her friends arrived that evening we all headed back up the river and helped them set up camp. When leaving to head back home I felt content knowing I'd be seeing her once again in a couple days as she continued along her route.

I took the day off from work, not wanting to miss another chance to visit with this inspiring woman. It was heart wrenching to see her leave. I'd met a true pioneer spirit sharing her positive attitudes of living a slower paced life.. taking nothing for granted, but instead sharing her kindness and wisdom, appreciating genuine hospitality from the folks she meets along the way.

Bernice is courageous and a most genuine soul to journey through life warming most every heart along the way just as she did mine. May the Great Spirit protect and guide her and her entourage every step, every mile of every journey.

I send my best wishes and gratitude to this special Lady Long Rider, Bernice Ende. I most sincerely hope our trails will meet again. - Betty Duncan"











from John McClain, August 7, 2009

HELLO TO HOME BASE..

MY WIFE, DAUGHTER AND I WERE OUT AND ABOUT IN THE CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5TH WHEN WE HAPPENED ON TO BERNICE AND CREW ASCENDING ANTELOPE PASSE. SHE HAD SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ROUT SHE HAD PLANNED ON HER MAP AND I GAVE HER MY BEST KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA IN QUESTION. WE WENT ABOUT OUR SEPARATE WAYS AFTER A SHORT VISIT. WE WERE RIDING OUR ATV'S AND LATER TURNED AROUND AND HEADED BACK TO CAMP. ON OUR WAY BACK WE TALKED ABOUT SUPPER AND FIGURED THAT BERNICE HAD NOT HAD A GOOD HOME COOKED MEAL IN SOME TIME, SO IT WAS PLANNED THAT IF SHE HAD CHANGED HER ROUTE WE WOULD INVITE HER TO SUPPER. AS IT WAS WE FOUND HER ON OUR RETURN TO CAMP. OUR CAMP WAS A FEW MILES OUT OF THE WAY SO IT WAS BETTER FOR US TO BRING SUPPER TO HER AT ANTELOPE GUARD STATION WHERE SHE HAD PLANNED TO SET UP CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.

WE LEFT HER A FEW MILES FROM THE GUARD STATION AND SET OUT FOR OUR CAMP TO MAKE SUPPER. I ENJOY COOKING IN MY DUTCH OVENS SO IT WAS A GIVEN THAT I WOULD COOK IN THEM AND THAT THE CAST IRON OVENS WOULD KEEP THE FOOD HOT FOR THE RIDE BACK TO BERNICE'S CAMP. I COOKED PORK STEAK WITH POTATOES AND CORN IN ONE OVEN AND MY WIFE KAREN COOKED GREEN BEANS FROM OUR GARDEN IN THE OTHER. WE LOADED THE OVENS ON ONE ATV AFTER WIRING THE LIDS ON TO KEEP FROM MAKING A MESS AND PUT MY DAUGHTER KRYSTA'S WATERMELON, OREO COOKIES, MILK AND SUCH IN A TOTE ON THE OTHER.

AS WE HEADED BACK TO BERNICE'S CAMP A THUNDER STORM STARTED TO BREW AND WAS HITTING US HARD AS WE ARRIVED AT HER CAMP. WE ALL TOOK SHELTER, AS BEST WE COULD FIND, TO WAIT OUT THE STORM. ONCE THE LIGHTNING AND HAIL HAD PASSED AND ONLY A LIGHT RAIN WAS FALLING, WE CAME OUT AND HAD ANOTHER NICE VISIT OVER SUPPER AS DARKNESS BEGAN TO FALL. KRYSTA FED WATERMELON RINDS TO HONOR AND ESSIE PEARL AND OUR DOGS AS WELL AS CLAIRE GOT TABLE SCRAPS.

AS WITH EVERYTHING, THIS VISIT TOO MUST END AND WE WENT BACK TO CAMP FOR THE NIGHT. WE TOLD BERNICE THAT ONCE WE GOT HOME WE WOULD SEND AN E-MAIL AS TO HER WHEREABOUTS AND TO LET EVERYONE KNOW THAT SHE AND CREW ARE DOING WELL AND SHOULD BE IN ARCO, IDAHO ON THURSDAY EVENING, HEADED FOR BLACKFOOT THEREAFTER. KRYSTA TOOK SOME PICTURES AND I WILL ATTATCH SOME ON THIS MESSAGE. TAKE CARE EVERYONE, AND WE WILL VISIT THE WEBSITE FROM TIME TO TIME TO SEE HOW THINGS ARE GOING. SINCERELY, JOHN, KAREN AND KRYSTA McCLAIN

August 10, 2009

"Greetings to all of you! One month. That's what it has taken to ride from Weiser, Idaho to Arco, Idaho. One month of mountain riding and some of the most spectacular riding I have ever done in the past four and a half years of long riding. I scarcely saw a fence in the whole of the ride and crossed the Salmon River Mountains, the Sawtooth, the White Knobs and the Pioneers. Just spectacular. Our National Forests are our national treasures and the people who manage and provide services for all of us vacationers should be applauded. I ran out of food west of Stanley and stopped in at the

Elk Creek guard station. They were quick to fill my bags with food and send me off. This is not the first time they have helped this long rider and I am so grateful for all the National Forest Service workers do for us from clearing trails to stopping to help with directions.

Many THANKS to you folks.

Fro Weiser we headed straight across to Smiths Ferry, then across the Payette river to Bear Valley to Stanley, where I was put up at the Salmon River Lodge owned by nationally know journalist Karen Day. We then headed down to Ketchum, then across Copper Basin where the bugs and flies were horrendous, but thanks to Teddy Rice's herbal insect repellant, bed sheets and fly masks, we were OK. (If you want more information on the herbal fly repellent check out Teddy's card on our sponsor page.) We crossed into Antelope Valley, then over the foot hills of the White Knobs where I got lost for a day, and the wind and rain tried to blow us off the mountain top. We survived and are now in Arco, Idaho at the rodeo grounds, resting, eating and cleaning horse gear. We head out this evening across the Snake River Plains, flat open land that looks like smooth sailing to us after all of the mountain riding we have just done. We are well, the horses have sleek summer coats and full round bellies from the luscious long stem grasses.

***A warm and hearty thank you to all of you who helped and offered encouragement. Our next long stop will be Soda Springs, Idaho where we will pick up mail and look at the Utah stretch. To all of you, may your trails be good ones.
Sincerely, Long Rider Bernice Ende"***





So now we leave in the morning, August 26th. Evanston, Wyoming will be my next mail stop and from there I head south to Grand Junction, Colorado. The horses are fit and fat and when I turn them out in the arena in the morning after spending the night in a stall they race around farting and kicking and squealing up a storm. They have bright eyes and eagerness in their step. They bicker back and forth about this and that but they can not be separated. We have ridden through yet another summer. The heat, the bugs, the long slow days are over, replaced with an urging from the coming fall weather. Claire's doggie couch as I call it, has been a success and Claire no longer walks even half the day. She likes her ride and Essie Pearl is careful with her passenger.

***As we say goodbye to Idaho, I send out a hearty thank you to all of you who helped with a safe passage across your beautiful state.
Until later, Bernice***

***Greetings to all of you that follow the ride.
We have spent a much needed relaxing 5 days at the Montpelier Fairgrounds, the Bear County Fairgrounds.
In two days we will be in Utah and the long ride through Idaho will be over. A touch of cool autumn air can be felt and it reminds me of***

the mountains I must cross in south central Colorado before snow covers the peaks, before ice covers the lakes and ponds. We must be in New Mexico, safely at my sister's home for a 2 week visit by mid-October.

I write from the Montpelier Library, one of the nicest small town libraries I have had the pleasure to stop at.

The decor is colonial and there are birds, song birds that fill the empty spaces with such delightful sounds coming from behind me. I consider our small town libraries one of our national treasures along with our national forest. This is one of the blue ribbon libraries.

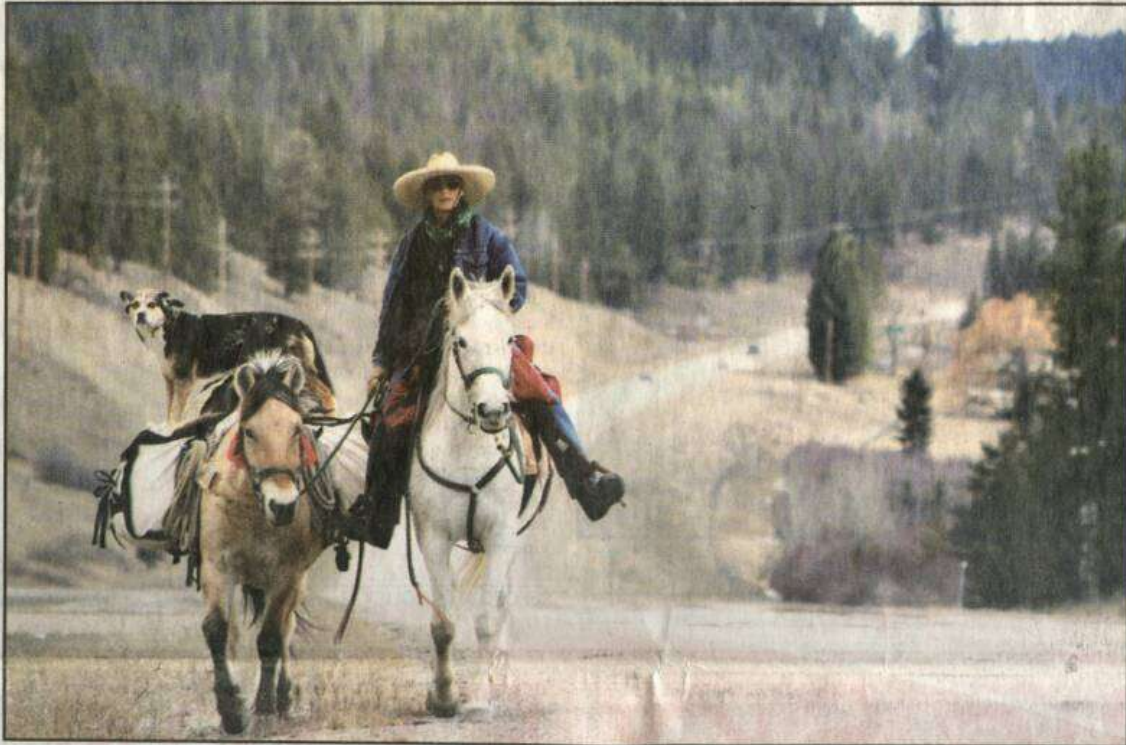
When I last e-mailed it was from Arco, Idaho where we had stopped for a short rest at the rodeo grounds. From Arco we traveled south across the flat open space of the Snake River Valley. A long hot ride to Atomic City where the mayor, Kelli Isaacs, found us accommodations at the RV park. It is a tiny little town and had that old west feel to it; it was a "community of misfits" Don said with a smile. Don was Kelli's friend and owned the RV park. A long full day's ride from Atomic City to the Snake River landing me on the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Land. It was late when I finally had to ride into a home asking for a place to camp and for water. It was Sherwin Racehorse who kindly let us camp on his front yard, fed Claire and I, offered a hot shower and helped with securing papers would allow us to cross the beautiful Tribal Lands east of Fort Hall. Shortly after leaving the reservation I rode into Chersterfield, Idaho, a Mormon town that was settled via the Oregon Trail route whose ruts could still be seen in many places. I get a small taste of what it must have been like for those tenacious people, but even I wonder :how did they do it"?

Soda Spring was the next town. I rode in just as the Senior Citizens were arriving for their afternoon lunch at the downtown Senior Center. I tied up the horses and went in to give a talk and to have lunch. An enthusiastic bunch greeted us and we left with full bellies (the horses were given bags of apples) and full packs. We spent the night on the outskirts of town and then gave a talk to the elementary school who thought the idea of a dog riding a horse both funny and curious. They were loaded with questions.

And that brings me to Montpelier where I have been staying at the fairgrounds. Last night I had two visitors from a northern town, a young couple who are planning a ride across the United States and came to dig up all they could from my years of riding. I get many e-mails from people planning to do a long ride, but unless they are willing to come and visit with me it is impossible to share all that I have learned from the past 12,000 miles of long riding via e-mail or phone. I wish them the best on their venture.. their adventure.

LONG RIDER HEADS OUT ON ANOTHER YEARS-LONG JOURNEY

And she's off



CASEY ARNESON/Tobacco Valley News

WITH OVER 7,000 MILES ahead of her, Bernice Ende heads out Monday on a two-and-a-half year circular journey around the United States and through Canada with her horses Essie Pearl and Honor, and her canine companion Claire.















**Monday, May 10th, 2009
Yakima Nation
Harrah, Washington
The Gwinn Wilson Home**

Greetings.. We - Honor, Claire, Essie Pearl and I, make our way slowly westward. Pressing hard against westerly winds that carry intermittent spring snow and rain showers; nights are still cold, but we're no longer freezing water bottles. Daytime temperatures are in the 60's most days. The smell of cool rain on hot pavement and dry dessert sage is ours. Honor's and Essie's winter coats have blown free. They are both strong, fit, moving well, resting well. Claire trots ahead dipping in and out of ditch puddles, creeks and canals. Rain followed us from Sandpoint, Idaho to Othello, WA. Yes, many wet days, but it provided water and cool temperatures across otherwise dry hot stretches.

We crossed over on to the Yakima Tribal land yesterday, May 9th. I came through Toppenish, WA where I stopped to speak with the Tribal Council to pay my respects and to ask permission to cross their land to Glenwood, WA. I greatly appreciate their permitting me to cross the Yakima Tribal Lands as it keeps me off main highways.

I have also stopped to visit with the Gwinn families whom I met in 2007 on my 5000 mile ride with Honor and Claire. In the summer of 2007, Elizabeth Gwinn, her mother Margret, and Sally Wilson stopped on the road near White Swan, WA because they thought I looked "worse than peeked". They set me and the animals up with food and water for the night and then I rode into their place the next day for a three-day visit, with many family members, eating fresh summer foods and touring Toppenish, WA and the surrounding area with Margret and Charles Gwinn. The road looks long as I turn in my saddle to look back. I rode out March 20th from Trego, MT with a foot of snow covering the ground. I had to pack grain and hay every day. I woke up to snow, slept on snow, and rode in snow many days as Nancy Haugen, our Eureka Veterinarian, can confirm. She rode with me for 2 days, camping overnight along the Kootenai River with her two horses. We woke March 27th to a couple of wet inches of snow covering our tents. There was snow on and off until Spokane, WA.

Even though Libby, MT is in the same county as Trego and I have been there often, it still felt like I was riding into a whole new town. I met new faces, gave a couple of talks and got supplies in order.

When I left four days later I left with many new friends.

We made our way down Hwy 56 and picked up Hwy 22 into Sandpoint, ID... a long, winding, dangerous road to ride that took me across the Cabinet Mountains. I stayed three days at the fair grounds. The Backcountry Horsemwomen came out with a potluck thanks to Debra Gullo. We also picked up a new sponsor, The Sitco Company, makers of top of the line saddle pads. Honor has a great new custom-fit saddle pad. I visited with Robin Campbell, daughter of dear friend MaryEllen Campbell from Eureka, MT. A new Sunbody hat was waiting at the post office for me. Many friendly, curious smiles in Sandpoint.

I made my way along back roads to Post Falls, ID.. a cold and wet stretch. I rarely stay inside away from the horses but I had to get in out of the rain. I spent one night with the Kenny family in Post Falls, then another 2 nights, April 14th & 15th, with Ray and Sharon Calton of Spokane Valley. Claire and I strayed warm inside as it snowed and rained outside. The horses wore blankets and had plenty of grass as well as being treated to a bale of alfalfa, thanks to a generous neighbor. My nephew Mark and his girlfriend Anna Zimmer came out with supper when I was camped south of Liberty Lake along a creek, some 30 miles south of Spokane, WA.

The first time I heard of the John Wayne Trail was from Ray Calton in Liberty Lake, WA. It is the old Milwaukee Railroad Line that runs east-west from Milwaukee to Seattle. It has been turned into a non-motorized trail for horses, hikers and bikes. I picked the trail up as I came into Pine City, WA area. The land had opened with beautiful rolling hills and creeks and rivers running wild. I ate fresh

watercress, nettles and dandelion or cooked the watercress with potatoes and onions. More and more green grass shouldered the roads and the horses ate until their bellies were stretched tight. We were treated to spring weather for a few days. We rode past old grain elevators, the ghost towns of Revere, Kenova, Roxboro, Marango, Pizzaro.. Only grain elevators, like discarded old skyscrapers, marked most of these towns. The land in this part of Eastern WA looks more like the open desert country of Wyoming than Washington. High desert mesas mark the horizon. Deep dry ravines cut through the rugged country.

I remember years ago passing the sign to Lind, WA off Hwy 395 that says "drop in sometime. Mount St. Helen did". Well, I thought, I have to see this town. "Charming" is how I'd describe Lind, WA. Grain elevators, trains, a combine demolition derby.. a quiet, pretty town. Dorothy Allert and her son Louis helped with hay and water when I put up at the old rodeo grounds. I was invited to speak at the Lind school and senior center. Sharon Englehart not only helped organize the talk but invited me to shower, wash clothes and use the computer at her house... and I met up with Pat Stark whom I had met on my 2007 ride. Really had a nice stay in Lind.

The John Wayne Trail took us all the way to Warden, WA, the first rattlesnake of the year, and a constant vista of open high desert country. I rode into Warden where Ann Smithwick saw me and asked if I needed help. "I do. I am looking for a place to camp for the night", I replied. She passed me on to a friend in town where I made a camp in an open field. Now the friends were Phil and Sondra Tucker and after we talked a bit we discovered that Sondra has an Aunt Betty Bishoff. The Bishoff families are my neighbors in Trego, MT. We had quite a laugh over that meeting.

I headed south out of Warden. This was the Columbia River Basin I was entering; irrigated land, a massive complex of water canals running from the Columbia River turning the dry desert land into luscious green fields. It is really quite the sight. I rode into Othello with a strong northeasterly wind at my back.... a cold day, and rain was in the forecast, but the Othello fairgrounds were hours ahead when George Colley stopped to visit. George told me the water was off at the fairgrounds and I should come stay with him and his wife Denise while I was in Othello. I was indeed glad I accepted his offer as it rained hard with heavy winds for the next two days.

I had ridden Hwy 24 across the Vernita Bridge over the Columbia River in 2007 on my 5000 mile ride coming from Yakima, WA. It is a long, dangerous bridge, busy with truck traffic. I chose early Saturday morning and made it safely across without incident. Stayed at the Vernita bridge for 2 days. Channel 6 from Yakima, WA came out to interview me. Jana Pekkaar from Seattle came over from Seattle with her son Hugo. More rain and heavy winds as we rode down the highway. We overnighted at the Silver Dollar Cafe

**and had the best hamburger I had ever tasted. It let down and poured on us May 6th, but we were out of the winds mighty blows behind a small shack, horses blanketed with rain ponchos. I met Linda Mims-Johnson while at the Silver Dollar Cafe when she stopped in from work at the Hanford Plant. I was sitting at the counter with my hat on another stool when she walked in for a drink. "What a beautiful hat.", she said. Well, that was all we needed. We talked and talked then she offered a place for us to stay at the end of the next days' ride, May 7th. We had two nights at the Mim's pretty home. It was much like an oasis; rich green grass, willow trees draping over a lovely pond surrounded by orchards. Today is May 10th, Mother's Day, and I have had a wonderful three day visit with the Gwinn families. Food, family and lots of talking and laughter. Today Elizabeth Gwinn, her Mother Margret and Sally Wilson and I drove the route I will take to Trout Lake, WA. We packed a picnic lunch, driving with majestic Mt. Adams in sight. Wild horses dotted the horizon. Trilliums, or wood lilies as they are called here, embellished the grounds. Morel mushrooms were just beginning to poke through the ground. We finished the day with another family get together. Sometimes it is hard to say goodbye; this was one of them. We are off in the morning with Claire sporting a new "saddle pad" to ride atop of Essie Pearl thanks to Sally Wilson and we are loaded with more food than we should have: delicious fry bread, salmon, fruit and cheeses. We will eat well the next five days that it will take to get to Trout Lake, WA. We hope to arrive in Battleground, WA before the end of the month. Until later, Happy Trails and my deepest appreciation to all of those who help, who are interested and send encouragement.
Your Lady Long Rider, Bernice Ende**

October 10, 2009

**We.. Claire, Essie Pearl, Honor and I arrived in Dolores, Colorado October 8th;
a windy day, but warm sun later in the fall. These are old towns down here and Dolores was named by Spanish Catholic priests who came through the area seeking routes from the missions in Santa Fe, New Mexico to California in 1776. Rio de Nuestra Senora de las Dolores, or
The River of Our Lady of Sorrows was first named by Dominguez and Escalante, Spanish missionaries.**

**My first night in town I spent at the old cemetery west of town that sits along a roughed boulder cliff
with Mc Phee reservoir to my south. Loretta from the post office brought us a bale of hay and we had a good spot after all. So many**

times I say I feel like a ghost from the past. Well here I was a ghost from the past spending a quiet evening with other ghosts from the past.

But let me go back to Vernal, Utah where I last e-mailed an update September 10th about the ride.

It was a one month crossing from Vernal, Utah to Dolores, Colorado; about 350 miles, maybe more.

The roads I took were slow winding back roads, National Forest Service roads and BLM roads.

I had spent five days at the Heritage park in Vernal. It houses the fair grounds, museum and event facility.. very nice. The whole town of Vernal was decorated with hanging baskets and huge pots of colorful flowers. So very pretty. I knew I was going to be crossing some long dry stretches of desert country south to Fruita, Colorado, so I ran out hay drops thanks to the Eric Powell family who so kindly drove me out in the pickup with hay. The day before I left a horrendous storm blew in and Oh,

did it rain! It was good fortune for us because it left puddles for days. And that meant my horses never went without water. I also met another long rider while in Vernal. Now, to meet another long rider who has done a long ride is one thing, but to actually meet one riding is another thing. Joan Wallace reminded me of myself on my first ride as she was traveling with one Quarter horse mare and 2 dogs and had come up from Northern Oklahoma heading for the NW corner of Washington. We went out for dinner and talked our legs off. She had stayed at several places that I had stayed on my 5000 mile ride in 2006. It was fun comparing notes. Hope she does OK. I am heading south into winter, she is heading north into the winter.

So the four of us left Vernal, Utah September 16th, 2009 with lots of heavy truck traffic from the mining operations in that area. It is wide open, vast land that can either swallow you up with intimidation or awe. We had water in the mining town of Bonanza and there was the Green River and then there were puddles. And I said to my self that the only way to cross a desert is to follow a storm. We stopped at a hunting camp for breakfast the second morning out and then made it over Baxter Pass, camping at the bottom as we were worn out after the climb up and over. The next day began well enough, but about noon a storm came raging in and it was a downpour. I ducked into a corral that had an old out house that was still standing and had a good roof remaining. There I stood with the horses heads inside while the packs were covered well and kept the rain off the horses backs. One more night and two full days landed us in Fruita, Colorado where the Country Co-op Store let me camp in a field across from the store. They were a big help with feed and information crossing down into Nucla. While I was in town

(with my horses in tow) I stopped at the library for maps. As I was tying up the horses to go inside I met Grace May Chew, daughter of the late, legendary poet, rancher and writer, Bill May from the Steamboat Springs area. Grace thought it was nuts to ride across the Grand Junction area and as she was a seasoned horsewoman herself I took her advice, which was for her to haul me over to the Whitewater area. And so she came and got me that evening and off we went to the Unaweep Canyon where I set up a camp next to the creek. Monica Wertenberger stopped by while I was still in bed that cold morning, bringing me supplies she thought I might need to cross over to Nucla. I had met Monica on Baxter Pass crossing five days earlier.

I just cannot thank these people enough who help like this! I have said it once and I will say it again, could not do these rides without a lot of help from others. We headed up the Uncompahgre National Forest, climbing the high steep mesa Divide Road that runs north/south through some of the most spectacular country I have ridden through: dancing aspen groves, all golden and crisp like wind chimes, that decorated the fall day with a rich sky so blue I wanted to stop and just look, just not move in this colorful panorama. The scrub Oak was every shade of red that one could imagine. Lots of handsome cowboys managing fat healthy cattle herds on National Forest lands. Frozen water bottles in the mornings. Rose Hip bushes covered the hill sides with rose hips the size of small cherry tomatoes hanging like rubies.

A few miles from the town of Nucla another cowboy pulled up next to me with a truck and trailer hauling a saddled horse. It was Lars Nashund and the Nashund ranch ran cattle on the Uncompahgre and he was just heading home. . . did I want a ride. I couldn't help myself. This guy looked just like Hoss on Bonanza. Even his hat was a Hoss hat and it turns out it was a Sunbody hat same as mine. He had an extra house that was vacant, and did I want to stay there?

So, I got to meet and have dinner with the Nashund family, Vanna, Lars' wife, JW, an up and coming 4 year old cowboy. And there was the newest baby and Grandpa Monte. Lars ran me around town to get supplies and there I was set for a few days while it stormed with madness outside. The horses had shelter. I reshod, made new booties of Claire out of cowhide Lars had, gave a talk at the school in Naturita thanks to Brittany Hibbert who made arrangements for me to speak there, washed clothes and slept until late in the morning.

Earlane Antonio gave a dinner party where I met several Cattle Women Association members. There was fresh garden vegetables everywhere and apples were ripe. It was a 'fill'er up' stop.

We left Nucla heading south to Basin. Had dinner with Lane Koon (she made me a T-bone steak that I thought was the most delicious piece of meat that I had ever eaten.). She and her husband own an dog grooming and no cage dog sitting business called WASH AND WATCH. Next day got me as far as Miromante Lake where I hunkered down for two days while a storm moved in and let the world have it. Hunters were out and about, the cow camps were busy, and it did not seem at all like I was riding across remote country. Four more days and three lovely campsites later we reached Dolores, Colorado. It was such a quick stretch from Vernal to Dolores, I told the girls we had to get into second gear because winter was on our heels. From Dolores we head for Cuba, New Mexico, then to Madrid where I will stay with the Adlers, Leslie and Jerry, whom I met five years ago on my first ride through New Mexico. Leslie is a veterinarian and will give the girls a thorough examination. I will put up in Madrid for a week or so before heading down to Edgewood to my sister's for another two week lay over...

Then we must look Texas squarely in the face.

Until later.... to all of you who have helped me make these rides possible with food, encouragement, donations and/or just and invitation in for a shower.... Many, many heart-felt Thank You's!

***Happy Trails.
Bernice Ende, Lady Long Rider***





December 19, 2009

Greetings to all of you that follow the rides,

The horses are shedding their Montana winter coats already! We are in Roswell, New Mexico, S.E. New Mexico state Fairgrounds. The temperatures are in the 60's, skies are sunny (they had 6 inches of snow 2 weeks ago) birds, birds, birds singing with delight. It feels like I've stepped back into summer.

We were greeted with smiles, waving hands and honks from passing cars and trucks as we made our way slowly and carefully down Hwy. 285, under the overpass along strip mall stores and businesses left and right of us, busy 4-lane traffic at the intersections. I bump the cross walk button with my Ariat toe boot as I sit in the saddle on Honor. Bravely, bravely my Honor makes her way; the sharp sound of steel horseshoes on cement and pavement. Her ears peaked, eyes on caution, full attention, her head at the bow, trusting, always trusting, waiting for cues from me. "easy girls, easy" I say quietly. I actually had not planned on riding into Roswell, thinking that my two horses would be "too fresh" after a 7 week layover. But 15 miles north of town a suburban truck stopped, the window rolling down, smiles on two faces stretching to look out. "we were just curious, where are you going?". I call these people the curious and the interested and I am forever grateful to those who stop to visit. And here was yet another reason why.... It turns out these two faces belonged to Russ and Rance Rogers, from Roswell, NM. Brothers out on a trip together, packed with sleeping bags, food and cameras. Out came the camera's, (Rance is a professional photographer). By the time they drove down the rode I felt I had made a couple of new friends that had filled my saddle bags with water and snacks, and... called ahead to their folks Kay and Dale Rogers, owners of the Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply letting them know of my arrival on the 16th.

The winter sunshine was already losing it's strength by the time I rode into Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply on the southeast corner of town. But to ride into handshakes and smiles was enough sunshine for me. "Feed Stores" are important places to me and I have ridden into countless feed stores over the years. Supplying me with hay, oats, horseshoes, directions, a place to tie up, a place to "put up" (camp). They are usually friendly places to begin with. The sound of cowboy boots on wood floors, the smell of hay and leather and feed supplies. Local ranchers and farmers standing together visiting. Cowboy hats atop lean brown, tanned men, catching up on local news, taking a break between the ceaseless work that their lives require of them. You can find out a lot about a community from the local feed store.

But I must say from the get go I knew this was not the everyday run of the mill "feed store" that Kay and Dale Rogers owned. It is not the impressive inventory that made it so remarkable. But the quality of care and interest that was shown throughout the dozens of employees and family members that worked there. Dale quickly called over to make arrangements for me to stay at the fairgrounds, hay and oats were brought over, Fruits and veggies spilled out from a bag for me and the horses and after dozens of hand shakes that left me feeling like a celebrity, we headed over to the fairgrounds to make camp.

We have been in Roswell 3 days now and the kindness and generosity from the Rogers Clan and all of those here at the Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply has been heart warming. But there is more.....Michael Holmes from the truck and tire department made Claire a new doggie couch!!!! and it is a masterpiece as

you can see by the photos. Oh, I just do not think he understands how much I needed, how important this contraption is for Claire's well being. I simply can not thank him enough. Michael came up with a safe, strong and light box that is engineered to fit securely on the Trail Max saddle pack from Outfitters Supply. And it looks so good!! I had trouble getting Claire out of the box and inside the tent last night. Thank you Michael, Thank you.

I also had a lovely lunch with the Ortega's, Steve and Cicilia who read about the ride in the Albuquerque Journal and emailed an invite before I even arrived in Roswell. I met and had dinner with Ted Beeley, the brother of legendary cowboy artist Joe Beeley. Dozens of folks came out to visit after the local newspaper did a nice article (see media page). It is hard to imagine riding 1000's of miles across wide open spaces; the sights, the sounds, the animals... It is all remarkable, but I must also say that it is the people that are the embellishment of the ride. I so enjoy the sharing of the ride with others.

But I really must look at leaving on Monday the 21st. We don't travel very far very fast, so if I don't keep moving Texas will never be under foot. Desiree Garcia(Rogers) will be handling the website for a time until my sister Carol takes it over so look for fresh new changes there. I still must re-shod Essie Pearl. When I was at my sister's in Edgewood her Farrier Brad Dirickson was kind enough to spend some time with me going over the principles of Natural Balance Hoof Care and I will be incorporating those techniques that seem like common sense to my amateur horseshoeing skills. Horses are rested and look great. We now head for Hobbs, NM a 7 day ride taking the back roads thru Dexter and Hagerman.

I wrote in my journal last night as I reviewed the stop here at Roswell. I thought about the Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply business that Dale and Kay Rogers own and manage with humor, love and concern that spills over into every employee that works at that incredibly busy store and is shown the customers that shop there. And I thought, you know this would never happen at Wal-Mart. These are places that make me proud to be part of this country, these are people that make the world a better place.

Happy Trails, Happy Holidays, sincerely Bernice Ende Long rider



Christmas 2009 was pretty special... I was camped off the Pecos River 5 miles east of Hagerman on December 23rd. Woke to rain and temperatures dropping. I was safe and dry but as happens so many times help arrived via Greg Barbie with hot coffee, cookies and an invite from the Gomez family of the Rancho del Rio just up the road.

Oh my, I thought - so close to Christmas I'll be disturbing them. But the invite held and so I made a break for it and rode into a lovely home for a wonderful, memorable Christmas with Dale and Elsie Gomez and the many that came and went over the holiday.

Honor and Essie Pearl had cover from the snow that fell Christmas Eve and a corral with alfalfa hay. Claire had friends as you can see and after Elsie said a blessing over our feast we all sat at a long beautifully set table for food, talk and laughter.

I can't thank the Gomez's enough I felt like I had been taken in like a daughter and was at home for the holidays. Gracias, Gracias!



January 29, 2010

Greetings, it has been a while since I last updated and even as I begin this update I realize that there is too much to write about in the short time I have at this computer in the Eldorado, TX library.

Let me go back to Hobbs, NM where I had put up at Harold Pruitt's home, waiting out a cold snap, snow and bitter winds inside a comfortable trailer with the horses under cover in comfortable stalls next to me. Harold was a friend of the folks from Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply and had called long before I had arrived in Hobbs offering a place to stay as the weather conditions were predicted.

I rode into Texas on January 1st 2010, what a way to start the new year!! With cold clear winds at our backs we made our way along busy roads, busy with oil truck business. I had no idea that this area is one of the largest oil producing areas in the country, WOW! We have been riding ditches, fortunately these are wide mowed ditches that stretch along the flat, open spaces of West Texas. Now, Texas is a big state, indeed; one only need look at the map to see that, but what the map will not tell nor show is the hospitality that is as big as the state itself. It has simply been unbelievable....

It began in Andrews where Tom Tyler met me as I rode in about 1pm down the busy working mans town. Well, Tom just stopped to say hello but he ended up being a very generous host. He made sure I had a place to stay, hay for the girls, arranged a talk at the senior center and an interview at the local radio station. Thank you Tom and Judy!

So folks from Andrews called ahead, and 18 miles down the road Jeff Huckabee came out with a horse trailer after dark to get me in off the road to the Odessa Rodeo College facility. I was to give a talk at the West Texas Cowboy Church the next day so I had to get myself in that evening. The Odessa Rodeo College program is an impressive place and rodeo talent is fostered and developed here from all over the country.

"I have never seen so many cowboy hats in church." That was my opening statement. What they lacked in their not quite finished church they made up for with a western style Sunday service. I really enjoyed it. Mike from the church called ahead to Roy Bowling, a two day ride south. It was a dangerous freeway crossing on 1788 between Odessa and Midland, but I was helped by Judy Hathcock and her husband who stopped after reading about my rides in the Andrews paper. She followed me safely across a very hectic noisy, truck stop, oil industrial section that could have been risky for any seasoned long rider.

I spent one night at the Bowling's corral off 1788 and what a lovely family. I meet families like this and I am so hopeful for our communities, our country, and our children. Roy also ran out a hay and water drop for my next night camped off the highway 15 miles down the road. Laura, Roy's wife, sent little Kate their daughter with a feast for Claire and I. Thank you so very much, to so many good people who stop and help. It just seems too much some times, I feel I can't say thank you enough.

We overnighted in Midkiff in the fire hall with help from Cowboy Dane Driver with hay and water again. More rain had me put up at Mike Schneider's pole barn. Mike has done a few short rides and I saw a old black and white newspaper clipping of him and his wife on a 200 mile ride a few years ago. I thought he looked like John Wayne.

The ghost town of Stiles, TX was another day's ride. Stiles is a ghost town which held the county seat until the railroad and Big Lake took it from the little town. Now all that remains are a few dilapidated buildings and the crumbled stones of the historical court house. Before I came into town Deputy Sheriff Josh Mitchell stopped to see if I needed anything. Before I could answer he was off and came back with a sack of feed and sent word on to his father in law who lived nearby to check on me in Stiles.

Well, then I met the Mathews; Jim, Linda, and their teenage daughter Julie and they brought out hay, water and a Sunday spaghetti dinner!!! I tell you I am gaining weight. While I was in Stiles, Sam Goodings and his wife Kate caught up with me to put horseshoes on the girls. I met Sam at Roy Bowlings home and was so impressed with this farrier that I asked if he would put shoes on Essie and Honor. (I do my own shoeing throughout the year, but once a year I feel I need a professional to put the shoes on, get a good balanced foot and just go over how the feet look.) I wish you could have seen these two, and heard the sound of handmade horseshoes taking shape. Like an artist with precision hands, the tap, tap ting, tap ting, of the hammer, not pounding away, but gently shaping hot steel. His quick hands moved with grace and skill. It was beautiful to watch, and the back drop was the old historical court house for this long time held craft of horseshoeing. The horses proudly wear their new horseshoes.

The next day I rode out started out like any other day, a clear sunny morning. I must have rode 10 miles when a pickup stopped and a handsome young cowboy stepped out and said with a smile " I've heard of you"... As is the custom in this part of the country, this young handsome cowboy quickly removed his hat, placed it on his chest and with a nod said " pleasure to meet you Mam." Oh I do love that - manners. Gerhard Holt, 6th generation rancher stood before me. He called ahead to Wanda Able's home for a place to put up. With that arranged, he was off.

Now here is where I should have my head examined! As I was going along minding my own business, I suddenly found myself standing before a starving little puppy under a bag of plastic and debris..... I said "No, please, no I can't do this"..... Well, now there are FIVE girls traveling along the highways of small town America. And that's where I'll leave it and finish the story as it does get better...

Happy Trails to all of you!

Bernice

In Honor of My Dear Honor

February 24, 2010

I suppose I should consider myself fortunate to have ridden over 13,000 miles over the past 5 years with out a serious accident...until now.

Yesterday afternoon, February 22nd, I had my dear Honor put down after a corral related accident left her right front leg/shoulder badly broken. There was nothing that could have been done - nothing. What exactly happened I do not know.

I had left the Wimberly rodeo grounds where we had been camped for 4 days to take care of business in town. When I returned I found Madalyn Ward DVM who "just happened to stop by to say hello". She was administering aid to a traumatized Honor, had already called ahead to the Austin Equine Associates of Driftwood, TX and had called a friend for a horse trailer. X-rays confirmed the worse, Honor's front right leg was broken. With kind hands and many tears Honor was quietly laid to rest.

I spoke with Madalyn later to find out what her thoughts were as she was the first on the scene. Madalyn thought it looked as if Honor had run into the corner of the steel fence broke her leg, fell and struggled to get up. Normally I would have left the two girls in smaller paddock pens. But that day I felt I was doing them a favor by opening the large arena for them to run and play. I, of course, take responsibility for what happened - it could have been prevented.

Oh, but my dear Honor loved to run. She never won a race on the track but speed was in her; it was not the first time she had hurt herself from similar situations. I should have thought better, that is all. Death and mistakes have a cold sobering effect.

Honor, Claire and I rode and traveled together an amazing 11,000 miles. Our first ride in 2006-07 took us on a 5000 mile loop throughout the western half of the U.S. In 2008, Essie Pearl joined us for a 3000 mile ride and last year in 2009 we, Honor, Essie Pearl, Claire and I rode another 2700 miles.

She came from the bottom of the barrel, a "no go for nothing-has been race horse". Registered "Native Tail" from the famous Native Dancer line of horses. I consider her one of the greatest teachers to have marked my life. From the get go until the very end it was a lesson in devotion.

I do not look to replace her, our relation came in a very unique package. She challenged me every step of the way with her crazed Thoroughbred spirit. But we filled each other with courage and her willingness and deep desire to move forward won my heart over. It radiated from her dark shining black eyes. I thought her brave and she often showed her affection and one person devotion with a soft touch by her warm nozzle as if to say, "everything OK?"

I shall miss her head at my shoulder walking the road together, eyes bright ears peaked, attentive, looking ahead, interested, she simply loved to move. She had become a remarkable, solid, seasoned long riding horse and had taught/seasoned me to the world of Long Riding.

Yes I will continue to Long Ride but as of now, I am ending this current 7000 mile ride here, here in Wimberly, Texas. Where and how and why I ride again will be different, its bound to be. Just not sure what direction I'll take when I do step back in the saddle again.

My deepest heartfelt thank you to all of those who helped keep me on my feet during this tragic accident. I know many of you will be as saddened by the loss of Honor as I have been.

To Madalyn Ward who just happened to be there, I can not thank her enough. She attended to Honor quickly, without hesitation and Honor was kept, because of her, quiet and comfortable. To Julynn Joyce DVM of Austin Equine Associates - of course - thank you for graciously assisting with Honor as she took her last brave breath.

Take strength in your memories and have faith in tomorrow, from Jan Parrish of Fisher, TX.

To all of you who share these rides with me - thank you for the well wishing, support, encouragement you have offered me and my girls over the years.

Until later Happy Trails
Bernice Ende, Long Rider









Letter from Tucker Saddlery

Yesterday we had the pleasure of a visit from one of our Tucker Trail Riders, Bernice Ende. If you aren't familiar with Bernice, she is a Long Rider, and uses a Tucker saddle. She travels with 2 horses and 2 dogs-Honor her TB mount, Essie Pearl the Fjord pack horse, and her two canine companions, Claire and Francis. Her current ride was planned to be 7,000 miles circling the U.S. starting in Montana, to Washington, down to South Texas, and then going East, up to Canada, and ending back in Montana. Unfortunately, the ride has been cut short. Honor was badly injured in Wimberly, TX in a freak accident in the corral and had to be put down. So, this ride has ended, as Essie will need to be seasoned as a lead horse.

For Bernice, long riding is not a job or a hobby, it is her life and her passion. Unlike other long riders that have undertaken a ride as a once-in-a-lifetime thing, Bernice has been long riding since 2005, with over 13,000 miles. She considers it a privilege and a freedom to be able to do what many others wish they could. She understands both the romanticism of the long rider and the realism of living off the land, day by day. Bernice says she never imagined the response she has received from the public. Along her ride she is welcomed into towns where she gives talks to various groups about her experience. She stops in the libraries to answer her emails. People offer their homes, food, and hearts to her and her traveling companions.

When Bernice arrived, we introduced her to the folks here at Tucker, and she brought in her Tucker High Plains saddle for "show and tell". WOW. This saddle has been ridden over 10,000 miles and has held up remarkably. The leather is soft and pliable as a glove, the Gel-Cush seat is still as comfortable as day 1, and Honor had never had a saddle sore. As Bernice explains, this saddle is an intimate part of her life. She sits in it for hours a day, every day, it's her chair, her bed. She can not afford to have a sore horse, to be held up in order to rest or heal. Compared to the riding that most of us do, this saddle is abused. And now that Honor is gone, it will be retired from the long ride.

We gave Bernice the grand tour of the new facility, from product design and computerized cutting, to the handcrafting aspect of saddle making. The common thread we always hear when we take someone through our operation is "I had no idea this much work went into a saddle!" After the tour we took Bernice "shopping" so that we could outfit Essie Pearl. Comparing the physiques of Essie Pearl and Honor would be like comparing a sumo wrestler to a ballet dancer, so a new (wider) saddle was definitely in order.

Tomorrow Bernice, Essie Pearl, and Francis will head up North to wide open spaces where Essie Pearl can be seasoned as the lead horse, instead of a follower. For a while, Bernice will continue the single horse ride with just Essie Pearl. This is the best way to rebuild the team and make a good long riding horse. But the single horse ride is lean and tough-no tent to sleep in, no extra supplies, just the bare minimum for survival on the road. In the meantime, Bernice will be looking for her next pack horse, and she is interested in another Fjord (if you know anyone with Fjords for sale, she would prefer a gelding, 6-10 years old with driving and road experience.)

March 3, 2010

Greetings to all of you, I am not quite sure where to begin. With thank yous - that is where to begin... To all of you that have so kindly emailed or have signed into the guest book with condolences for the loss of my dear Honor, really she was all of ours. Over the years you have shared in our trials and tribulations as we have traveled the thousands of miles across this country of ours. I am deeply touched by those of you who have graciously written with kind words to ease the loss. Thank you.... I must say I feel like I have had the wind knocked out of me. I feel like I have lost my legs.

But now I must gather us up and look ahead at what needs to be done to get back on the road... I have decided to move forward with Essie as lead horse. I am packed and ready to leave Wimberely, TX in the morning Wednesday March 3rd. With only front and rear packs on Essie Pearl, we will head North by Northwest, pull back away from the interstates and Austin traffic in search of wide open, quiet roads where I can introduce a new horse to the world of Long Riding.

Of course, I first must find that horse...and am considering another Fjord, so if any one knows of Fjords in Northern Texas send word --- I am looking for one. I am also sending Claire to stay with my sister in New Mexico until I have another horse safely in place. Little Francis will ride on with Essie and I as she needs to learn many road skills and this will be a good time to work with just her and Essie.

Despite the tragic loss of Honor I did have a wonderful visit with my sister. She is my "little sister" and we are very close. She works for the non-profit organization Eden Alternative that is dedicated to change and improvement of nursing homes as we know them today. I think what she does is immensely important she is inspirational with her dedication to this new vision for elderly home and health care. For more information google Eden Alternative.

I would also like to welcome a new sponsor that has "climbed on" to ride with us, the CLIMB ON PRODUCTS. (Please see their ad on the acknowledgment page). Polly and Amy Reynolds are the owners and creators of this line of incredible skin care products. I met Polly as I rode into town last week. She was racing by on her bicycle when she turned her head and for a brief moment our eyes met and smiles flashed across our faces. Polly went home and called her sister Amy to tell her what she had just seen. Amy came out to the rodeo grounds north of town where I had set up camp. She brought samples of their skin care products -- I probably looked like I needed them.

Now imagine being inside my warm tent that night. I am tired and dirty and don't smell particularly good. And I open these lovely containers and suddenly the air is filled with delicious scents of essential oils as I lavish my dry rough skin with these wonderful creams and salves bringing my tired senses alive again... These are salves that I can use on the dogs feet, the horses cuts and hoofs. There is a complete line to select from, so check them out! You won't regret it. WELCOME CLIMB ON PRODUCTS NICE TO HAVE YOU RIDING ALONG WITH US!!

I did make it down to Yoakum, Texas, unfortunately it was with my sisters car not with Honor and Essie you can read about my day at the TUCKER SADDLE COMPANY from the story and photos that Tuckers sent for the website. I was so proud to go in and show them that High Plains Saddle that Honor had worn for 4 years and over 10,000 miles. To me it was like a work of art. Now Essie is sporting a new saddle... Don't you think Essie looks pretty sharp in her new Gen II SADDLE? And so comfortable, do you think I can get another 10,000 miles on this saddle? We shall see, we shall see.

Well this will be it for a few weeks. We will head North, beginning a new ride. I think I will head up to Minnesota to attend a wedding of a nephew and to visit family of course and then we will head home for Montana. Should be back end of October, perhaps earlier. Again, from the bottom of my heart I thank all of you that support these rides with your encouragement and with your interest.

Until next time, Happy Trails Bernice Ende

Letter the Editor:
Lady Long Rider bids fond farewell

Dear Editor:

I can not thank this community enough for all of the heartfelt condolences and your show of concern over the loss of my horse Honor. It is always difficult losing something so close like a family member, it is the risk we take as longriders. My travels have taken me through small towns across our vast United States, it is truly the heart of America.

I leave your small town of Wimberley without my horse Honor, but my heart has been filled with kindness, generosity and graciousness from those who live here.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,
Bernice Ende, Lady Longrider

Honor's Eulogy

Long rider's journey takes an unhappy turn
by Austin Prowse

Honor, the loyal thoroughbred of Bernice Ende, died Monday after enduring an unknown impact to the shoulder, shattering its front right leg-to-shoulder joint.

While Ende made a quick trip into town Monday afternoon, veterinarian Madalyn Ward, stopped by the VFW rodeo grounds where Ende and crew were camping to say hello.

That's when Ward first discovered Honor to be down. Ward provided comfort and aid to Honor, quieting the suffering horse and even had a trailer en route to pick up the horse as Ende was making her return to the grounds.

Honor was transported to Austin Equine Associates in Driftwood, and upon arrival was X-rayed. It was determined that Honor had sustained a terminal injury, a humerus fracture, and was euthanized that evening.

Ende suspects that Honor and her cargo-carrying Norwegian Fjord, Esse Pearl, were horse playing in the large-sized corral Monday afternoon. She said, normally, she

wouldn't have left them unattended. That is when the "freak accident" occurred, Ende said. Ward thought that it looked as if the horse ran into the corner of a steel fence. The 11-year-old, flea-bit grey thoroughbred that Ende rescued from what she described to be "the bottom of the barrel," carried Ende 11,000 miles across some of the greater American west.

"She has carried me and carried me very well. She was a noble animal," said Ende in retrospect. "We carried each other."

Ende fathoms the perils of traveling farther east because of the denser population. Through her long riding experiences, she has learned to trust her intuition and has developed a great understanding of what it will take to get her crew on the trail home, especially while taking the reins of a new lead horse.

Consolidation will be key, as Ende will no longer have a packhorse to carry her tent, supplies and loyal dogs. She will also have to face the uphill challenge of training Essie Pearl to not spook so easily as the new full-time horse.

Ende said there are all kinds of elements to be faced by the crew, including rumbling 18-wheelers, sharing narrow bridges, freeways and the transition into the mountains, which may include run-ins with bears and other wildlife.

Ende expects to be getting back home to Trego, Mont., some time next winter, but as of now, said Ende, the 7,000 mile journey that began last March has ended.

The Heart of Texas

March 20, 2010

Greetings from the "the heart of Texas" where spring has arrived, wild flowers and green grass show their color, the delicious scent from the Agarita plant fills the air and the local folks shed their winter jackets. (And I think Montana is scarcely waking from winters cold and snow, I may never go back -- I am only kidding I'll be home before next winters snow covers the ground.)

Well, with the help of a great many people I am back in the saddle and have another horse. It has been quite a story and here briefly is how I have come to have another horse and beginning a new 2010 ride.....

After leaving Wimberley, TX on Essie Pearl with Francis tucked behind me on the bed roll, packed lightly with no tent and "lean" as I call it, (single horse riding is "lean" no frills riding) I was heading north by north west. We over-nighted at the Wayne and Jenifer Ziegler home. We spent time at the Steward's lovely "fishing cabin" on Cyprus Creek and gave a talk to 100 screaming and terribly excited kindergartners dressed as cowboys and cowgirls at the Walnut Creek Elementary in Dripping Springs. On to Llano with trail visitors from Jennifer Frame and friends that brought out delicious hot burritos

and we visited until late into the night. Its nice to have guests for dinner...The Rick Smathers family hosted an over night and then another night at the stock yard corral outside of Llano. Nice weather, easy ride.

It was in Llano that I met up with Holly Nixon, a cowgirl and now a dear friend that I had previously met when I rode in heading east for Wimberley, Texas. I stayed at the Nixon ranch a week when I had an abscessed tooth. Holly and her husband Tommy had a downed cow (me) on their hands and they so graciously cared for me and my entire family of animals until I recovered. So Holly feels like an old friend that I have known forever, truly a kindred spirit.

There had been a couple of offers from ranchers in the Menard area for horses to replace Honor and to help get me back on the trail. One from Carl Kothmann and one from Odie Wright, both of which I had met earlier on the ride. So there we were, Holly Nixon and I on the lawn of the magnificent historical building in Llano having lunch deciding whether or not to trailer over and look at the horses. I had in my mind that I would pick up another Fjord but there are so few Fjords in these Texas hills and I really did not want to ride single horse much longer. So....we did.

Mr. Kothmann's horses are well bred quarter horses but were "more horse" than I needed. Then there was the horse from Odie Wright....Now get this his registered name is "I'm a Lucky Kid". Well, I thought, as I looked at this huge 16.2 hands (it is how a horse is measured) 14 year old gelding, a beautiful horse with kind, quiet eyes and a strong build. "You are the one". Well, needless to say he's no Fjord, but I feel I have a great horse to carry on with. I have named him "HART", because... We are in the geographical heart of Texas and because he has a heart as big as Texas itself and the Wrights must have big hearts to have donated such a horse and... because I can now say... "I ride with Hart". I affectionately call him "Mr. Right".

Odie Wright has the Title and Abstract Company in Menard and his son Tyler has "FIND A RANCH.COM" and how in the world I will ever repay them for donating this wonderful horse I don't know. When a horse like this comes into my life and rides with me for 1000's of miles, he is needless to say mine for life. He'll never be sold or given away, these are life long commitments. Thank you so very much Odie and Tyler Wright, Thank you.

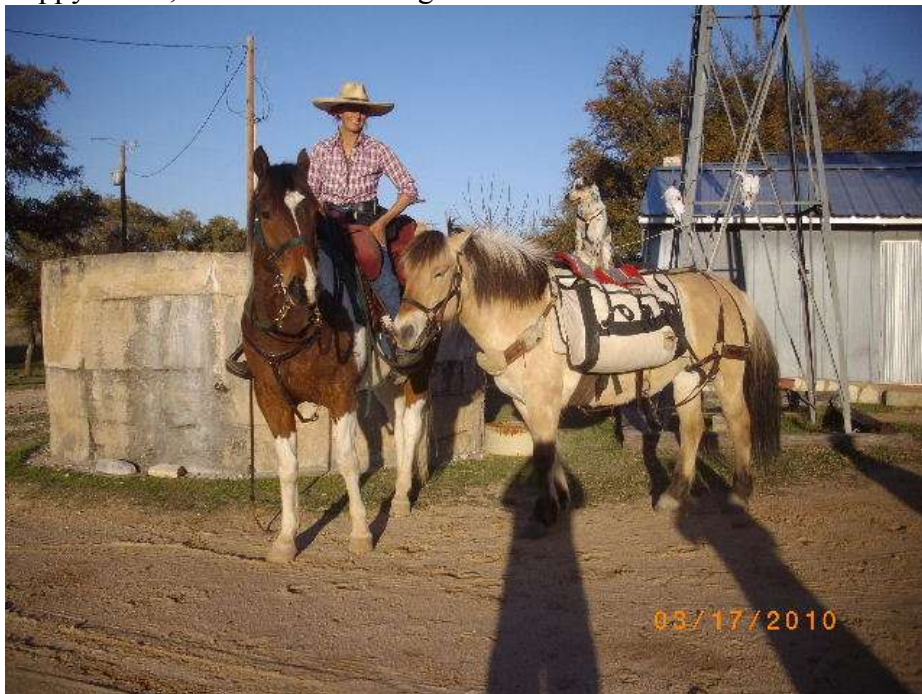
Essie Pearl likes her new friend and they have bonded unlike her and Honor, I think she just wanted a boyfriend!!! It has been a busy week getting supplies together. Holly and I have been running here and there, putting Hart thru spook tests like covering him with plastic tarps and umbrellas and the like. He is good, real good. Dr. King from the Equine Veterinary Clinic in Fredricksburg gave him a thorough going over and vaccinations all of which he so kindly donated, many, many thanks to them. Oh so many people to thank.

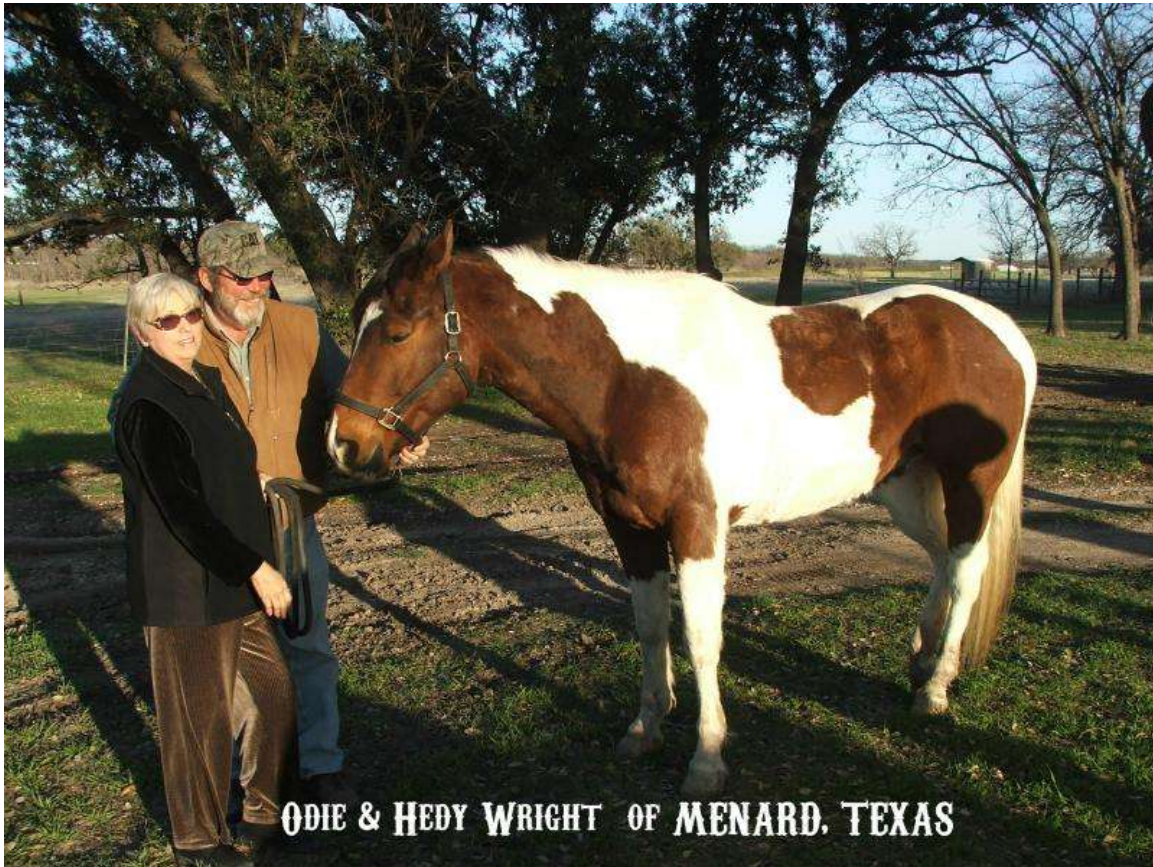
With new horse shoes from Rusty Felps the horseshoer for the Nixon ranch and a brand inspection paper we should be set.

Tuckers Saddle has sent me out with a beautiful new Gen II saddle and you can see that on their website. Another comfortable saddle that fit well from the get go. Outfitters Supply has sent replacements for picket lines and hobbles and water buckets. But for the most part all of my gear is holding up amazingly well...I HAVE GOOD SPONSORS WITH EXCELLENT PRODUCTS!!

We head out on Thursday March 18th almost 1 year to date from leaving last year on my 7000 mile ride. I know it is hard to leave with out my beloved Honor, always so very hard to leave behind that which we love. But one must go on, and so we do and of course we go on because there are so many that have helped us and that are willing to believe in us. To all of you whose lives we touch and who touch mine -- A deep, heartfelt thank you, my pockets are buldging with Texas.

Happy Trails, Bernice Ende Long Rider





A big THANK YOU to the Wrights!

I first met Odie and Hedy Wright...and most of the family in February as I headed east for Wimberely, TX. They are life-long residents of the Menard area. Odie and son Tyler are both land brokers and the entire family is very active in the local community. The Wright's graciously put this tired old long rider up for a night and sent me out with one of Odie's famous breakfasts before riding on in the cold winter weather for London, TX.

It was on that first meeting that Odie said jokingly, "Well, if you ever need a horse I've got one just right for you, he's a big paint gelding that would do the job". Honor and Essie Pearl at my side I had such fine horses with me, I couldn't even imagine another horse in my life. When the Wrights heard about my tragic event with Honor, they were one of the first to offer a replacement horse. It is always risky starting a new horse out -- can they, will they handle all that a long riding horse must deal with, it's so hard to tell. But now after a week with "Hart", I think I am taking out a great animal with a "heart as big as Texas itself". I affectionately refer to him as Mr. Right.

I am of course so deeply grateful to the Wright's to have donated a horse the likes of Hart. and am proud to have FindARanch.Com riding with me as a sponsor. If you are looking for that perfect Texan ranch, do not hesitate to call Tyler Wright "Help'n you find your Texas Ranch". Glad to have you riding along Odie and Tyler!

March 28, 2010 - Letter from Bernice

Dear Kathy,.....

(Kathy Lewis is our postmaster in Trego, MT and a dear friend)

Here is a postal service story you will enjoy...

I left London Texas on March 18th, riding from the Nixon Ranch where Holly and Tommy Nixon had hosted my stay and so graciously helped with finding and preparing my new horse Hart, (from the heart of Texas). One box had not yet arrived in the mail, a box from Outfitters Supply, one of my sponsors. The box contained much needed ropes, collapsible buckets and hobbles. Holly said she'd get the box to me one way or another. Six days later I ride into Rowena, TX, some 100 miles north from London. A small town with more empty buildings than used ones. But it has a spectacular Catholic church towering the skyline, a steakhouse that filled the air with delicious home cooking scents and...the Rowena Post Office. Of course one does not ride into town with two horses and a dog riding atop unnoticed. Mr. Fisher gave me permission to camp next to the old cotton gin and the Lange's, Pat and Sharon came to offer a hot shower and to wash my clothes, which I gladly accepted. Sharon also sent me out with a jar of cactus blossom jam - oh my, Kathy!! delicious.

Morning sunshine had already warmed the cool, damp air by the time I walked over to the post office on Main Street. I wanted to check to see if Holly had forwarded the box on -- she said she might. Post Master Debbie Ballard rose from her desk with a smile to see what this stranger in a big hat wanted. My two horses were tied out front to the fire hydrant, sleepy in the sunshine. I introduced myself and inquired about the box - but no box had arrived. Now, Debbie was so taken by the fact that I had ridden down from Montana. We talked and of course, photos were taken. She took photos of me and I took photos of her to send to you.

Ok, so here is the Heart of the story... With parting smiles, I turned and rode North for Wingate, TX, a 2 day ride. Maybe the box will be there, I thought.

In the mean time, Debbie Ballard postmaster extraordinaire worried about the long rider's missing box. She called over to London to see if it had even been sent. "No, No box had been sent but we know who might know about it, Holly Nixon". The London postmaster calls Holly. Holly calls the Rowena post office...only in small town America will this happen....Holly tells Debbie, "she is driving up with the box today, where is that lady long rider?"

So now it's Debbie's lunch break and what does she do?? She drives out in her bright yellow Hummer with the message from Holly and finds me on the side of the road at the intersection of Farm Rd. 2133 and 2111 talking to Jim Crawford, a farrier of 32 years who had stopped to visit. I couldn't believe it! Debbie and I are all smiles and laughs because it is just fun and because we know this would not happen everywhere. She handed me her cell phone and I talked to Holly. Now Holly and I are beside ourselves with Debbie and her "going beyond the call of duty". Traveling by horse is never dull.

Ok, long story short, Holly arrives with the box from Outfitters Supply with the much needed equipment. It was hard to say goodbye as we have become good friends over the past few weeks. But this is not the end of the story!! March 24th landed me at the Belk Ranch, home of Elsie and Alan Belk. They were friends of the Lange's back in Rowena who had called ahead for a place to stay that night as a storm was blowing in, and it did blow. Elsie and Alan have Angora goats, lots of them, a beautiful home filled with incredible paintings that Elsie's 91 year old mother had painted over the years.

It was a strong northerly wind that blew when I left the morning of the 25th, but Wingate was only 13 miles down the road and...Debbie Ballard postmaster extraordinaire had called ahead to Vicki Hensley another postmaster extraordinaire - Texas has many! Vicki came out of the Wingate post office with a big smile on her face and said "Well it's about time! We have been expecting you!". Preparations had already been made for me to stay at the Hollis and Bette Dean's home. Vickie Hensley's husband Troy came strolling up with a face that held a thousand stories under that handsome cowboy hat of his to say hello. I had already heard about Troy Hensley's father "Andy", who had trained the famous horse Poco Bueno, a cutting hall of fame horse and rider who had won the world finals in 1953. I know this horse trivia - but pretty big stuff around here.

Ok, but here is the frosting for this story. I am heading down the road after many handshakes and smiles - relieved to know I have got a place to rest for a couple of nights. Vicki, Troy and a few others were waiting for me at the turn off road to the Dean's home. When along comes a yellow Hummer!! Yes, it is Debbie and she is bringing out a fried chicken dinner for my supper.

Kathy I simply wanted to cry -- all of this WEST TEXAS HOSPITALITY! How can I or will I ever be able to say thank you enough. So, there is a Postal Service Extraordinaire Story for you.

Miss you and look forward to seeing everyone back in Montana before snow flies.

Hugs and smiles your lady long rider friend, Bernice



April 23, 2010 - Wheeler, Texas

We... Claire, Hart and Essie Pearl and I ride out in the morning without our dear Little Francis with us. Last week she developed a condition that I thought may have been caused by poison or by something she had eaten. Her condition grew worse and I sought help from the Wheeler Veterinary Clinic, Lee Ann and Ben Ed Hillhouse D.V.M.'s. The Hillhouse's graciously accommodated us in a nearby house and gave Hart and Essie much needed shelter from the heavy rains in the clinic corrals. Francis was treated with simply the best of care and Dr. Hillhouse let me keep Francis with me, and I came over to the clinic with Francis in my arms for several checks throughout the 4 days we were there. It was obvious that exploratory surgery was going to be needed. What was found was a deteriorated lung condition, but from what? Lung tissue was sent off for a biopsy. It had possibly been there for quite some time and could have been congenital was what Dr. Lee Ann Hillhouse thought. Her stomach problems were only secondary to her lung condition.

It is always hard, just plain hard for those of us that care and love our animals as we do. Little Francis wanted so much to live, she tried hard. The single one word that best describes that little kind "ditch puppy" soul would be DEVOTION - that was what that angel was made of. Like having a big smile in your presence. She traveled with us only 2 short months, but it seemed she had been with me such a terribly long time, like an old soul. Oh, I say with a deep ache, I will miss that little one.

So Texas has claimed two of my animals. This big state that has taken 3 1/2 months to pass thru. I will be out of Texas in the next week. I have said more than once "Texas will be a chapter of its own" - so much happened.

But this is short and I will be out and away from the computer for a couple of weeks. I end this update once again as it always seems to be this way, with many thank you's.... To the Hillhouse Veterinary Clinic, Lee Ann and Ed, I can't imagine that I could have been in better, caring, devoted and skillful hands, I deeply appreciated your being there, for helping our beloved animals as you doctors of Veterinary medicine do.

And to all of you that have kindly emailed, sent warm thoughts and prayers our way, many, many thanks. I cried hard this afternoon but I knew that I was not alone. Until next time.....We move on. Bernice Ende

May 3rd, 2010

Greetings from Ashland, Kansas!

The weather is warmer and thunderstorms and tornadoes are something that I must be careful of. I stop at the local libraries to get 10 day forecasts and of course I am forever asking local ranchers and farmers about the weather.

The Kansas landscape is one of my favorite to ride. The long straight dirt roads are quiet with plenty of wind mills with water tanks at their base along the way. And an occasional car that stops with a friendly smile at the wheel. I am from the mid-west raised on a dairy farm in Minnesota so this always feels like home, this part of the country we call the MIDWEST.

I head now for Nicodemus, the small historical town that was settled by the emancipated slaves so many years ago. Their courageous, brave story that brought hundreds west to a "promised land" is a story that Angela Bates, Nicodemus's historian continues to tell. I first met Angela in 2006 and then again in 2008, so I really must ride up and see Angela and visit with her again.

Hart is doing very well and he seems suited for this kind of travel, slow and easy, lots of attention and care that all seems to suit him just fine. He is good natured and welcomes the petting from strangers.

We are now using hand made horseshoes from Sam Gooding who lives in Midland, TX. He makes them and sends them out to me as I need them. We took impressions of the horses hooves when he came over to Wingate, TX to re-shoe Hart. This new method of shoeing for me is revolutionary for me. I will be able to re-shoe the horses 3 to 4 times with one set of horseshoes.

The shoes on Essie have lasted over 1000 miles now and I will surely get another setting on them. When I say reset I mean I will pull the horse shoe off with tools and then trim the hoof and then reset the horseshoe. These are beautifully handcrafted shoes made from a heavy plate of steel, that is heated, pounded out and shaped into a custom shoe. It then has boreum placed on the toe and heels for longer wear on the pavement.

Skito Saddle Pad Company has sent out new forms for my saddle pad that fits Hart as I was there was rubbing that had to be stopped on his back. Again I think back on the nightmare that I had trying to prevent my horses from sores and rubbing. I would not ride with anything else but the Skito Saddle Pads now. My dear horses backs are clean and soft because of these pads, and of-course because I have a good fitting saddle from Tuckers Saddle Company.

I also received new pack gear from Outfitters Supply. New panniers!! Its like getting new luggage. The Trail Max equipment has never let me down and I am so brutal with the gear, it is used like no one else uses the equipment. I simply feel like I have the best sponsors and I can never say thank you enough to all of them.

We head out in the morning after a 2 day stop over at the lovely Ashland Fairground. Ashland is a pretty mid-west town, full of trimmed lawns, huge trees planted by early settlers, and a community spirit that brought out handshakes and smiles when I rode into town.

Until later Happy Trails!



A little bit of history on this remarkable little town - Nicodemus is the only remaining town west of the Mississippi that was settled in 1877 entirely by, and for, emancipated slaves during the Reconstruction Era that followed the Civil

War. Coming from Kentucky and Tennessee, searching for a better life, a free life, the pioneering ex-slaves created a vibrant community on the Kansas prairie. The Reverend Simon P. Roundtree was the first settler to arrive, followed by husband and wife, Zack T. and Jenna Smith Fletcher. The Nicodemus Town Company was formed and they printed up fliers and began spreading the word about this place of opportunity.

Over 300 tickets were sold to people seeking a new life and they arrived at the closest railroad station, which was Ellis, KS, fifty-five miles away. The families walked to Nicodemus. By 1887 there were over 500 people living and working in the tiny town. The Union Pacific Railroad proposed an expansion that would bring much needed commerce to the area. Even though the township was able to raise \$16,000 in bond money, Nicodemus and the railroad were unable to reach an agreement and the expansion ended up moving six miles away, on the other side of the Solomon River, to the Union Pacific Railroad camp that later became the town of Bogue. Businesses began to move away and over the years the light that had held Nicodemus for many years, began to fade. The dust bowl of 1935 brought the population of Nicodemus to 75 inhabitants. By 1950, that number dropped to 16 and the post office closed in 1953. Today 20 residents call Nicodemus home.

On November 12, 1996 it was listed as a National Historic Site and today, thanks to historian Angela Bates, it is a designated stop on the African American Experience tour of the National Park Service. **Nicodemus is not just a place, it is an authentic African American community.**

Thursday, June 10, received a card from Bernice. It reads: Arrived Red Cloud, NE to see folks that I'd met and stayed with on 2006 ride. Pretty cobblestone streets and historic buildings. Now heading towards northeastern Nebraska. All is well - B.

When I asked the thin man with a cap, standing on the corner outside Brainard Cafe, if he knew of a place I could put up out of the weather for the night, he said, "Yeah, try the Bailey's at the end of the street, tell them Sam sent you, its got a big red barn on it. Can't miss it". So off I went, the clip-clop of steel shoes against hard pavement down Cleveland Street. Brainard, Neb. Pop. app. 325, small town America. A hot, balmy, late afternoon, storms approaching, severe weather conditions, I needed to have shelter for all of us.

One never knows, it is part of the life of the long rider, one never knows what and who is to be the one, the one who will help you? It's a surprise!!!!

At the end of the street stood a huge red barn gently hidden in the past under thick shade trees and rich vegetation, quietly standing there as pretty as a picture. Barns are favorite sights to me, they are girlhood memories of dairy cattle, riding bareback on sweaty hot horses, farms are magical. As was Fox Run Farms and the Bailley- Kovar families who took a lady long rider in for the night, offering shelter from the storm. At the end of Cleveland street, on the west end of town lay Fox Run Farms, a family run

CSA farm (Community Supported Agriculture). In the family 111 years and now holding the 7th generation, (8 month old Jett Bailey).

I am a promoter of small farms, I speak to many 4-H clubs , I encourage farmers and ranchers to carry on, to continue the tradition of the small farm and of the importance of our small farms, the quality of life and the independence that comes from farm life. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is an a organization that I so believe in, please read more about it below**. When I meet families like this I am encouraged for the future, I feel hope, I feel that We can make a difference. The pleasure was all mine, thank you Fox Run Farms for the hospitality!

Had a call from Bernice and the other night she took a tumble while chasing after Essie and cracked a rib! On top of that, Hart tried to get back to his Texas roots and did the two step on her foot! So, our Lady Long Rider is a bit battered and bruised this week, but she is OK. She is on the mend but taking a rest for a few days before continuing on to Minnesota. Another update coming this weekend!

Hello,

My name is Holly and I would like to tell you about how my sister, Sara, our friend, Ashley, and I helped this amazing Lady Long Rider!

It was Saturday, June 19th, 2010, and we were on our way to our own little camp-out just south of Brainard, NE. We were driving down the road heading out of Brainard, and we saw this lady with two horses and a dog. Ashley asked if we should turn around and ask her where she was headed. So we did, and we pulled up beside her and Ashley asked where she was going, where she was from, and all these questions! Then, we told her that we too ride horses in 4-H and that we love to trail ride. Bernice asked if there was anywhere to camp because it was almost 7:30 p.m. and it looked like it was going to rain. So Sara, Ashley, and myself told her that she could camp just north of the baseball fields, (there is also the high school track there, but nobody uses it.) So, we all walked in between the trees and helped her set up her camp for the night, wash, feed, and help out with her horses. We were asking her all these different questions about what it's like to ride everyday, and Ashley realized that Essie Pearl had lost a shoe. Bernice said that she had noticed it earlier that day, but she had horseshoes waiting for her in Spalding, NE, (which would be about three days from Brainard.) Bernice also asked us if we knew anybody who did or had any horseshoes, and all three of us [Sara, Ashley, & I] all said at the same time, "STEVE!!" So, Sara called the man who does our horse's hooves, Steve Wheel, and asked if he could drop off a horseshoe. He said he would be there as soon as he could. When Steve got there, he gave her the horseshoe and shaped it for her, too! When Steve had left, we had to be going soon, too. So we said our goodbyes and wished her luck on the rest of her ride and we then headed out, too.

Here are some pictures that we took while we were helping her set up camp, and stuff!! I hope they go through!

Like I've said before, I never know where help will come from and just outside Brainard, NE, I was assisted by three wonderful, young ladies, Holly, Sara and Ashley. Hart and Essie lucked out....they got a spa treatment!

To the Scribner Chamber of Commerce:

My one week stop over at the Dodge County Fair Grounds, like any good vacation, passed quickly. I have rested well, as have my horses. Repairs were made on equipment, the website was updated and packages mailed on. I watched local baseball teams in friendly competition on the lovely Spear Memorial Athletic Field. I took advantage of your community swimming pool to ease my aches and stiff muscles. I found broad smiles and strong-farmer hands-handshakes while at the post office. I was offered much needed "computer help" while in the library. Those who care for the fairgrounds made sure I had a comfortable stay- adding a fan, chair, (a radio from Karen Benne) and "let us know if you need anything", to my campsite. I spoke to the "team 4-H" group, glad to see that 4-H, like FFA and Farm Co-ops are alive and well.

In 2006 I rode through Scribner, a relatively new-long rider (3000 miles under my saddle). I met in that cool fall weather, generous people who seemed to sense I was in need of their encouragement and neighborly small town warmth. Now in 2010 at the end of 15,000 miles of long riding, I have returned to Scribner, Nebraska, a town that, to me, examples everything that is good about our country. Many, Many thanks.

Sincerely,
Lady Long Rider, Bernice Ende
July 1st, 2010

Scribner, Nebraska

In 2006 I rode through Scribner on a 5,000 mile ride with Honor and Claire. Scribner left such an imprint on me, its friendly people, the fairgrounds and wide cobblestone streets that I had to return. So here we are once again for a much longer one

Had a call from Bernice and she crossed into Iowa at Decatur, NE. She rode through Onawa, Correctionville, Cherokee, Peterson and Everly and she is now

heading towards Lake Park. Mosquitoes and flies are pretty annoying and the heat is intense, only allowing her to ride early mornings and then stopping to find cool shade for her and the crew. Next stop, Minnesota!

a note from Beth Krummen in Lake Park, Iowa

Do not fear !!!!

Loved meeting this amazing woman. We are all here to help each other, teach each other, inspire one another, and live ! This was a day of learning and inspiration for me.. My mother, who lives south of town, gave me a heads up about her passing through. Bernice and crew were traveling by their home. my mom got on her bicycle and rode along side her for about a mile and visited. My mom was excited to call me and encouraged me to find her !

I did find her on the outskirts of town! I told her that my mother had just phoned me and she was smiling and shared the nice time she had with her just a few miles back. We talked a bit. I asked, "do you not have fear?". a simple confident, "no". I gave her a few tips on where she would find food and a few necessities. she asked of a place to rest and asked about water. later, a couple hours later, i found her !!!!this picture was taken where Bernice found a shaded area to rest, wash and cool the horses, and share a meal. I asked her where she got the water because there was not an obvious source in sight. she responded, "they (city workers) were flushing the fire hydrant right there!". I responded in disbelief and joy because really that doesn't happen very often ! She laughed and covered her face, "It always always happens this way. everything works out. always." do not fear. do not fear. trust. cool stuff. thanks bernice !
